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Review of the implementation of the programme of work 2018-2019
Sustainable housing and real estate markets

Capacity building on affordable and decent housing

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The Committee at its seventy-eighth session (ECE/HBP/190 para 21) requested the Bureau to elaborate on concrete proposals for the cooperation on capacity building in affordable and decent housing with its key partner organisations.

This document contains short information on and results of a study conducted by the Committee secretariat related to an assessment of opportunities for the cooperation of the Committee in capacity building in affordable and decent housing.

The Committee will be invited to endorse the recommendations and request the secretariat to develop an action plan for capacity building activities under the Committee's programme of work based on conclusions and recommendations of the study. The Committee will also be invited to conduct a survey of member States to identify the needs and priorities of member States for capacity building activities.

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I. Introduction

1. Capacity building and sharing of best practices and lessons learned in all the areas of housing and land management is an important component of the Committee's programme of work (ECE/HBP/2017/7). The Committee's secretariat is organising national and regional workshops, seminars and training courses for policymakers and/or experts in the ECE region on housing and land management (including real estate) and spatial planning on regular basis.

2. These capacity building activities are aimed at supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and other relevant global and regional agreements at national and local levels. The capacity building activities organised by the ECE are based on the needs assessments in the countries. These assessments are regularly conducted through regional thematic surveys, national reviews, the Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management, as well as city level studies, Smart Sustainable City Profiles[1].

3. The need for a closer and more systematic cooperation in developing capacities for affordable and decent housing has been widely recognised by the Committee and its partners active in the ECE region. The Committee is actively cooperating on capacity building activities for affordable housing with UN-Habitat, the UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, Housing Europe Federation, the World Economic Forum, Union of Cities and Local Governments, the European Commission, Eurocities, Union of Capitals and Megacities of CIS and many other global and regional organisations and networks, cities, private sector and academia. On energy efficiency in buildings, the Committee works jointly with the ECE Committee on Sustainable Energy; it also cooperates with international organizations, such as the International Standards Organizations, the Passive House Institute, the European Buildings Performance Institute, the Copenhagen Center on Energy Efficiency, etc. to implement the activities of the Joint Task Force on Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings. Multiple capacity building activities are already organised in cooperation with the Committee's partner organisations, however, these joint activities are usually held on an ad hoc basis.

4. At its seventy-eighth session, the Committee on Housing and Land Management requested its Bureau to explore areas of possible cooperation with key partner organisations invested in affordable and decent housing sphere and to elaborate upon concrete proposals to instigate a more systematic and long term cooperation on capacity building (ECE/HBP/190 para 21).

II. The Role of the ECE in capacity building activities in the region

5. As one of the regional commissions, the ECE, is uniquely positioned as a neutral intergovernmental platform to support exchange of knowledge and best practices between its member States, as well as to develop regional policy guidelines, promote dialogue on housing policies and practices between governments and a wide range of stakeholders. The ECE Committee on Housing and Land Management implements a number of activities, which are of great value for the ECE member States. These activities include annual sessions of the Committee, thematic conferences and workshops on housing, land

[1] See more in http://www.unece.org/housing/publications.html

and urban, advisory missions, studies and publications and other training activities. In the last five years, the most common capacity building activities were workshops, followed by conferences, round-tables and informal expert group meetings. These took place in Geneva, Switzerland (where the Committee secretariat is located), Brussels (Belgium), Chisinau (Republic of Moldova), Yerevan (Armenia), Minsk (Belarus), Vienna (Austria), Kyiv (Ukraine), Washington DC (USA), etc. The key topics addressed by the ECE capacity building events are: sustainable housing, smart cities, energy efficiency in buildings, sustainable urban development, strengthening national capacities, governance in land tenure and other urban-related areas.

6. Moreover, the Committee has produced several important documents for the region, including the UNECE Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management in the ECE Region for the period 2014-2020[2], the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing[3], Regional Report on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development for the UNECE Region to Habitat III Conference[4] and the Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development[5]. These documents address the key challenges that member States face in ensuring access to affordable and adequate housing,d sustainable urban development and land management.

7. ECE, in cooperation with national and local governments along with academia have established the Geneva UN Charter Centres of Excellence to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda and Geneva UN Charter at national and local levels. The Charter Centres have been established in Estonia, Glasgow and Albania, with seven other Centres in the works.

8. The Geneva UN Charter Centre in Estonia was established in 2016 in Tallinn, Estonia in cooperation with the Estonian Union of Co-operative Housing Associations (EKYL). EKYL is specialized in the development and organisation of training programs on housing management for local housing management associations in Estonia and for countries with economies in transition. The centre in Estonia focusses its capacity building activities on management of multiapartment buildings.

9. The Geneva UN Charter Centre in Glasgow, United Kingdom is coordinating activities to implement the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing as well as the New Urban Agenda. The Centre conducts research, develops capacity building on sustainable urban development in association withministries, cities, NGO and academia. The key topics for research and capacity building include: investigation of comparative urbanism through integrated planning; town, neighbourhood and city design; and landscape art, design and ecology.

10. The Charter Centre in Albania is in the works, with an update on its activities to be presented in the near future.

III. Objective of the paper

11. This paper summarises a study on cooperating on capacity builing programmes, which was conducted by a consultant on a request of the aecretariat of the ECE Committee on Housing and Land Management. The aim of the study is to analyse opportunities for long-term cooperation between the Committee on Housing and Land Management and its

[2] http://www.unece.org/housing/strategy-sustainablehousing.html
[3] http://www.unece.org/housing/charter.html
[4] http://www.unece.org/housing/habitat3regionalreport.html
[5] http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=48305

partners on building capacity for affordable housing in the ECE region. The methodology of the study included a desk research on the existing capacity building activities via a survey. The survey was sent to twenty existing and potential partner organisations that work on housing and urban related issues in the ECE Region. Based on the responses, the consultant conducted interviews with representatives of nine organisations who expressed interest in collaborating with the ECE. The report was prepared on the outcomes of the survey and the interviews.

12. Due to time and financial restrictions, the consultant interviewed only a selected number of existing and potential partners. The Committee's capacity building activities are organised in association with several partners in public, private, NGO and academic sectors (Please see a list of partners who provided inputs to the study in Annex 1).

IV. Summary of the study results

13. The outcome of the study found that the Committee's integrated capacity building initiatives on providing affordable housing is to reflect the Committee's expertise in its implementation of the 2030 Agenda the New Urban Agenda, Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing and other regional agreements and guidelines. Hence, all future workshops and training programs are to reflect the principles of the aforementioned agreements.

14. The paper recommended that at the national level, training programs should reflect the findings and recommendations of the ECE flagship product Country Profiles on Housing and Land Managament. The Country Profiles contain contain reliable data, in-depth analysis and concrete policy recommendations for the member State that was reviewed. In cases where Country Profiles were not conducted, an assessment of the housing situation and policies should be conducted prior to organising capacity building activities.

15. Further, the capacity building activities are to be tailored to the needs of trainees. In cases where multiple actors are involved in capacity building activities, it is important that each actor has a specific and unique responsibility. An analysis of the role of different stakeholders in housing policies and management is available in the UNECE report on the outcomes of the survey "Challenges and priorities in housing in the UNECE Region (2013).[6] Further, individualised training curriculars are to be developed for different client groups – local authorities, homeowner associations, national policy makers, private sector representatives. A proposed training activity is "executive training". The aim of this training is to train leading practitioners (8-10 people) from a specific country (which may reflect the recommendations of the Country Profile on Housing and Land Management prepared for the country).

16. Capacity building activities should be tailored to the specific region's economic, social and cultural context. It is also important for training materials to be made available in local languages. It is crucial to engage the national and local stakeholders. Subregional meetings such as UNECE-UN-Habitat training on housing policies for CIS countries organised in Belarus in 2011, have proven to be effective in engaging all relevant stakeholders. Such subregional workshops could be organised in Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia as well as in South-Eastern Europe and in new EU member States.

17. As per the interviewees, topics for joint capacity building activities should include: affordable housing, homelessness, urban regeneration, regional and urban planning,

[6] http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/Publications/Sythesis_Report.pdf

sustainable development concept, climate change, innovation and housing finance. The Committee addresses most of these topics in their activities, with plans to extend its areas of work into other aspects of housing, urban and land management.

18. The study identified that it is important to intergrate an interactive approach to capacity building activities whilst also addressing the international agreements such as the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda. It is important that not only are the contents of these agreements covered comprehensively but also that the needs of the stakeholders are addressed. If these factors are addressed, a tailored made capacity building approach can be created for each country.

19. The study recommends that a regional portal with elearning materials be made available. E-learning can be delivered speedily and with ease, and the costs associated with the learning and development for the stakeholders are drastically reduced. The study recommends that a webportal with e-learning are to be be structure according to following themes:

- Affordable housing
- Tenancy law
- Urban Agenda
- Social housing agency
- Energy efficiency
- Subsidy
- Security of Tenure
- Desegregation in housing
- Cities in Transition
- Housing Finance
- Funding and Delivery of Affordable Housing Supply
- Housing in the European countries
- Financial support to Social Housing

20. It is also important that the regional portal be made available in different languages, for example, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing text is available in 13 languages.

21. The Committee will be invited to endorse the recommendations of this study. It will also request the secretariat to develop a two year action plan for capacity building activities under the Committee's programme of work based on conclusions and recommendations of the study. Further, since the latest assessment needs was drafted in 2013, the Committee is also invited to conduct a survey to identify the needs and priorities of member States in relation to capacity building. An update to the needs assessment is also important to reflect the global agreements: the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, the Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing, the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda.

Annex

ECE Committee on Housing and Land Management cooperating partners on capacity building which provided inputs to the study

UN-Habitat, a UN specialised agency which is mandated to address the issues of urban growth, is focusing on human settlements worldwide with extensive experience, from the highest levels of policy to a range of specific technical issues and expertise in all urban matters. It works in a number of themes related to urban development processes, including, among others: planning and design; housing and slum up-grading; resilience; gender; human rights etc.

Housing Europe Federation, the European Federation of Public, Cooperative & Social Housing. Established in 1988, Housing Europe is a network of 45 national & regional federations gathering 43.000 housing providers in 24 countries that manage over 26 million homes, about 11% of existing dwellings in Europe. Their policies and actions include advocacy work in economy, energy, urban & social issues, monitoring of the affordable housing sector via the European Social Housing Observatory, capacity building for its members and more.

Housing Partnership for the European Union is one of the thematic Partnerships, established following the Amsterdam Pact on the Urban Agenda for the European Union. The Partnership is a new instrument for multilevel and cross -sectorial (horizontal and vertical) cooperation to deliver more effective solutions to urban challenges and ensure a more integrated approach at the level of Urban Areas. The objective of the Housing Partnership is: to have affordable housing of good quality with a focus on public affordable housing, state aid rules and general housing policy.

FEANTSA – is the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless. The ultimate goal is an end to homelessness in Europe by engaging in constant dialogue with the European institutions, national and regional governments to promote the development and implementation of effective measures to end homelessness; conducting and disseminating research and data collection to promote a better understanding of the nature, extent, causes of, and solutions to, homelessness; and promoting and facilitating the exchange of information, experience and good practice between FEANTSA's member organisations and relevant stakeholders with a view to improve policies and practices addressing homelessness.

Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS), a research and training institute which works to develop human and institutional capacities, to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life in cities, specialized in training and education on Urban management, housing, urban economics, etc.

Metropolitan Research Institute (MRI) – is an independent institute in Budapest, Hungary, with a multidisciplinary team of experienced professionals (economists, sociologists, planners) working on different aspects of urban development. In the core of the interest of MRI research is the development and performance of European cities.

POLIS University in Albania, which is a private higher education institution established according to the Albanian legislation. It is specialized in areas of urban planning, design and management; Housing; Environment; Business management; Environment; etc.

University of Thessaly - The main mission of the University is the promotion of scientific knowledge through research and the contribution to the cultural and economic development

of the local community and wider society. It is known for its excellent research performance and outstanding scientific achievements, in accordance with the international standards.